

Email from SAT to KCC 28th June 2018

As you know, myself and Seamus Murphy visited Holmesdale today. We were both impressed with Tina and it is evident that she has a skills set which with the correct level of support should help ensure that the school makes a speedy exit from Special Measures.

We have concerns about both the proposed school improvement contract and the LA Statement of Action.

Specifically, the proposed school improvement contract does not provide sufficient reference to teaching and learning, improving outcomes or personal development and well being. There is insufficient emphasis upon developing effective leadership and management and there is scant focus upon post 16 provision.

There is also an absence of effective success criteria other than provision "should be rated at least Good by July 2019." The inclusion of this sole vague success criteria indicates an absence of understanding of monitoring the complexities of lifting a school out of Special Measures. In my view, both the areas of focus are ill conceived and the mechanism by which the contract holder is held to account is vague and offers the LA little means of effective evaluation. In effect what we have here is something that neither effectively supports the school, the LA or the contract holder.

Having looked at the school our view is that the school improvement contract needs to be linked to the five grade descriptors within the Ofsted handbook and the success criteria needs to be based around visible and definable outcomes such as examination results and attendance and exclusion figures.

On this basis we consider that the following support provision is

required for 2018/ 19. Teaching and Learning - 70 days
Leadership and Management including executive headship provision – 100 days.
Outcomes - 50 days. Post 16 - 30 days. PDWB - 40 days

We are happy to produce a detailed specification for this work which would scope out what specifically would need to be done. In addition we would expect the contract to last a minimum of two years - i.e total value of the contract - Clearly we would expect this sum to be met from outside of school funds . In our view a contract of this value and scope should prove sufficient to lift Holmesdale out of Special Measures within two years.

On a less urgent basis, the LA Statement of Action needs work to ensure that it is considered fit for purpose in time for the first Ofsted monitoring visit in October. We consider that it requires several days of work to ensure that all actions and success criteria are the correct ones for the school and that milestones for achieving actions are realistic. In addition we need to be confident that the outcomes targets are achievable . Prior to doing this it would be our intention to conduct a thorough review of provision to ensure that the current position is appropriately captured.

On a separate note, I am meeting with the staff on Monday at 3.30 to introduce the Trust to the staff and explain that we hope to be working with them in the new school year. In addition our annual leadership conference is taking place tomorrow and we have invited Tina Bissett in order that she can get to know the Trust.

In conclusion - we want to take on the school improvement work for September up to conversion, however with a spec that works for the school, the LA and us. We are happy to prepare something for you or work with your team to put something together. In addition we are happy to begin work on the LA Statement for Action in order that it is fit for purpose.

Shall we discuss over the phone next steps in relation to

the above? Regards

Jon

Jon Whitcombe | Trust Principal | Swale Academies Trust